

As you walk along the water and the jumble of streets, imagine the changes that have happened all around you. Long ago Native Americans made use of the plentiful fish and shellfish in the creek. The area, more water and marsh than solid land, filled and emptied with the ebb and flood of the tides.

The European settlers called the river Chelsea Creek, Chelsea after the English city and creek because it is a tidal waterway. Surrounded by grazing cattle and farms, Chelsea Creek was the backdrop for the earliest victory of the Revolutionary War. The area remained rural through the 18th century, serving as the gateway to Boston from the north. Slowly the marshes and creeks were filled and the hills flattened to create more land and lure more settlers. In the 1800's, grand hotels were built to serve city dwellers who took advantage of the ferries and the area's healthy air and pastoral setting. With the advent of the Industrial Age, the hotels faded and the waterfront sprouted boat yards and factories.

Chelsea Creek remains a working river and waterfront. As you walk around the cities of East Boston, Revere and Chelsea try to catch a glimpse of the river. Chelsea Creek- the constant in this ever changing area.

The Sagamore
Rte 16

The Native Americans tribe known as the Sagamore arrived in the Creek area 12,000 years ago. The nomadic Sagamore moved to different areas through the year to take advantage of seasonal abundance and local resources.

The Sagamore would have visited the creek's salt marshes in warm weather to take advantage of the plentiful fish and shellfish in the river and the nearby fresh water. Remnants of their fish weirs, preserved in the mud, have been found in area marshes.

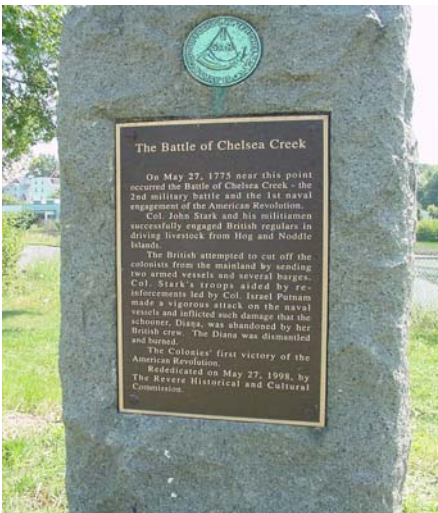


Lush salt marshes once dominated Chelsea Creek. The marshes supported a bounty of fish, shellfish and shore birds. Remnants of the marshes remain only in Mill Creek.

Cary House
34 Parker Street

This historic building was the summer home of Gov Richard Bellingham. First elected Governor of the Bay Colony in 1644, Bellingham was probably most notorious as a character in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*.

Bellingham's considerable Chelsea holdings were purchased from Samuel Maverick then leased as four large farms. Capt. Samuel Cary eventually inherited the Bellingham estate, (it took 115 years to settle Bellingham's will) in the late 1700's.



This plaque on the banks of Mill Creek commemorates the first naval battle of the Revolutionary War. The Battle of Chelsea Creek and Noddle Island was the first victory for the thirteen colonies against the British.



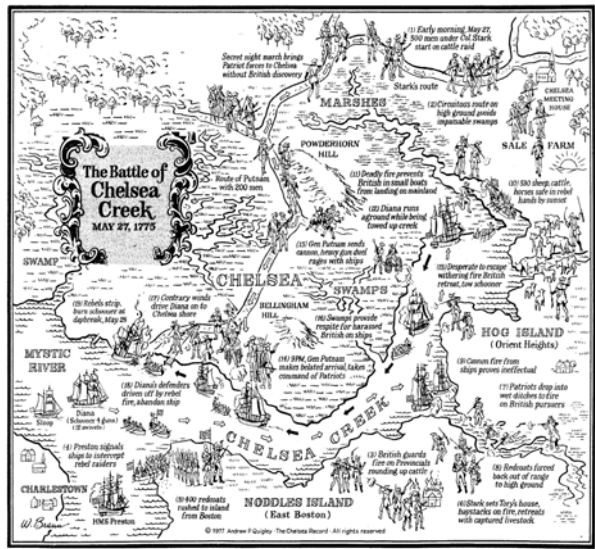
Gov. Richard Bellingham built a hunting lodge in 1659 on a portion of his Chelsea lands. His house was expanded by successive owners and still stands as a protect historic landmark.

Battle of Chelsea Creek
MDC Rink, Rte 16

Rebels, led by Col. Stark, and the British clashed on the Creek and Noddle Island in May of 1775, just 40 days after the 'Shot heard Round the World'. A protracted battle ensued. The colonists captured the British ship Diana when she went aground. Stripped of her weapons and supplies, the militia burned the ship. This battle is significant as the first victory by the Colonists in the Revolutionary War.



Historic Slades Mill was in use until 1976, first used to grind corn and later spices. The dam that held the high tide waters to power the mill is still in place. Before the mill was built, this spot served as a ferry landing- Mr. Newgates Landing ferrru



This Historical Tour was developed as a collaborative effort of citizens, city officials, and state agencies.

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Chelsea Creek: A River Flowing Through History

Welcome to Chelsea Creek and the historic communities surrounding this fascinating body of water. We invite you to spend a few pleasant hours rediscovering the history and beauty of these unique creek/river-side communities.

Fenno's Tavern still stands at the base of Fenno Hill as it has for over a century. Close by is Horation Alger's birthplace. Alger, a Harvard graduate and protégé of Longfellow, wrote over 120 books inspiring American youth with their 'rags- to- riches' theme.



Fenno Hill Tavern
Broadway

Travelers to Boston as well as farmers bringing their goods from the north would travel down Broadway through Revere to the ferries in Chelsea. This route saved a 25 mile slog through marshes, rivers and crude roads. Fenno's Tavern served as a well known landmark and an important way station. Opened in 1835, the tavern was run by the same family for generations and served for many years as the only store for the town.

Ohabei Shalom Cemetery
Wordsworth Street

It was not until 1844 that Massachusetts authorized the consecration of the state's first Jewish Cemetery at this site. Temple Ohabei Shalom Cemetery is still in use today. Adjacent is the Bennington Street Cemetery of 1834. The two cemeteries were built in what was once a remote area before the infilling of East Boston's marshes and tidal creeks.

Perusing the names on the grave markers illustrates the great diversity of people who migrated to East Boston. Still more arrived by ship, passing through the East Boston Immigration Center. At one time, only Ellis Island received more immigrants each year.



Ohabei Shalom Cemetery was once surrounded by boggy ground before the filling of the marshes began in earnest in the 1800's. Cemeteries were thought a suitable use for the 'worthless' and remote marshes.

East Boston Reservoir
White Street

After plans to pipe water across the harbor was deemed too costly, a reservoir was built on top of historic Eagle Hill and filled with water from Cochituate. East Boston High School replaced the reservoir. Just next door is the home of the ship builder Donald McKay. Clipper ships were the greyhounds of the sailing world and no one built them better than McKay. His ship yard excelled in building clipper ships for the China Trade and the Gold Rush including the famous Flying Cloud, renowned for its record breaking trip around South America.



The famous ship builder Donald McKay built his house on what was once Noddle Island. The location allowed a view of both the Creek and Boston Harbor.



A view of the Creek as it looked from the site of the old East Boston Reservoir atop historic Eagle Hill.

When William Forbes moved his company to Chelsea in 1883, he built a factory made distinct by the addition of a spire, and a bell and clock tower. His business grew markedly and the complex grew to 18 buildings, housing 1,000 employees.



The Block House on Condor Street made block and tackle gear for use on ships and in industry.

Admirals Hill
Commandants Way

The oldest permanent house in the Bay Colony was located on Admirals Hill. The house was built by Samuel Maverick in 1642 after claiming 5,000 acres under a Royal Land Grant.

In 1833, the Navy built the first naval hospital here on Admirals Hill and expanded it after the Civil War in 1865. The clean air and healthful conditions creek-side were thought quite beneficial for the recovering and wounded.



Remnants of the country's first naval hospital still stand on Admirals Hill having been spared from burning during the Great Chelsea fire of 1908. The buildings overlook Mary O'Malley Park and provide views of the Creek and inner harbor.

Ferry Village
Marginal Street

Ferry service to Boston began in 1631 from the Winnasimmet area of Chelsea. Inns and hotels soon followed to cater to travelers and "Ferry Village" began to grow. In 1842, a row of distinguished houses were built just east of the ferry. These became the homes of wealthy ship captains involved in the China Trade. Three Captain's house still remain but the ferries do not. Three hundred years of continuous ferry service ended in the 1930's.



Wealthy ship captains lined Marginal Street with their distinct columned houses. Great hotels and inns also dominated Ferry Village in its hey day.



The inventor Lewis Lattimer was born across the street from the 'Garden Cemetery' the oldest graveyard in Chelsea. Garden cemeteries were the fashion for a time; built as attractive places for loved ones to visit the de-

Lewis H. Latimer
Shawmut St
Born in Chelsea in 1848 to fugitive slaves, Lewis Latimer rose from his humble beginnings to become a self taught engineer and a talented inventor. Latimer was the only African American member of Edison's 'Pioneers', inventing the carbon filament- an advancement that made light bulbs long lasting and affordable.

The presence of escaped slaves, such as Lattimer's parents, suggests the Creek was a stop on the Underground Railroad. While little exact information was recorded, Chelsea Creek would have been an ideal stop for escaped slaves traveling by ship.

Industrial Age

Orient Heights
Crestway Ave

What is now East Boston and Logan Airport was once a series of five islands: Noddle, Hogg, Apple, Bird and Governors. Over the years the hills, remnants of the glaciers known as drumlins, were leveled and used to fill the marshes. What was once Hogg Island, and now Orient Heights, still dominates the skyline offering an unparalleled view of Chelsea Creek.



The entire creek and its working waterfront is visible from the top of Orient Heights at the Don Orione Cross. To the right, as the river curves into Mill Creek, sits the old Forbes Lithography complex built by the noted artist William Forbes.